

Editorial

COVID-19 and spinal cord injury professionals: Maintaining a scholarly perspective

The spread of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 virus) throughout the world has raised global concerns about vulnerable populations, including the population with spinal cord injury and related conditions. These individuals face increased health risks, limited access to care, uncertain availability of caregivers and medical supplies, difficulties meeting their basic needs, and may suffer more than others from the consequences of social distancing. When hospitals experience a huge influx of patients, the special care needs of those with spinal cord injury may be more difficult to accommodate. To help address the scope of these concerns, the community of SCI professionals is coming together to provide resources, advocate for quality care, and gather information on the impact of the pandemic on individuals, the health care system, and SCI research.

Amidst the personal and professional challenges, there is much to be learned about the impact of COVID-19 on the SCI community. Maintaining a scholarly perspective will enable us to apply the lessons learned to better prepare for future public health crises. The current crisis is an opportunity for SCI professionals to raise awareness of the special care needs of persons whose lives have been altered by injuries and dysfunction of the spinal cord.

Many providers are unfamiliar with the unique aspects of medical care for spinal cord injury. Educating emergency care providers is critical to ensure that individuals with respiratory complications receive targeted interventions. To raise awareness, experts from the Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals have authored guidelines for respiratory

care for rapid open access publication. These guidelines apply to individuals with respiratory compromise due to spinal cord injury, as well as those with stroke, multiple sclerosis, and other neurological conditions.

Like the pandemic, the flow of information is rapid and ever changing. To help relay new findings to clinicians, all peer-reviewed COVID-19 content published by Taylor and Francis, the publisher of the Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine, will be made open access. Access the COVID-19 portal at the home page of Taylor and Francis Online (<https://www.tandfonline.com/>) for free access to articles from their portfolio of science, health and medical publications.

To add to the body of knowledge specific to spinal cord injury care and research, we are joining with ASCIP to issue a call for papers to be published in a special issue of JSCM. We encourage scientists and clinicians from all disciplines to consider studies that will help their colleagues across the globe understand the impact of COVID-19 today, and the implications for tomorrow's care and research.

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